We claim:

1. A button pawl shaft for releasably joining first and second panels comprising:

a shaft connected to one of said first and second panels, said shaft having;

a pawl on opposite ends of said shaft, each of said pawls having a portion thereof which is shaped so as to be engageable with a respective keeper on one of the first and second panels upon rotation of said shaft, and a button on said shaft between said pawls, said button actuating the rotation of the shaft when a user applies a force to said button such that each of said pawls engages the respective keeper on the other of the first and second panels.

2. The button pawl shaft of claim 1 further comprising at least one bezel along said shaft in which said shaft rotates, said bezel connecting said shaft to one of said panels.

3. The button pawl shaft of claim 2, wherein said button pawl shaft further comprises:

at least one pocket along said shaft, and

a spring located in said pocket, said spring applying a force in the rotation direction of the shaft on the bezel and on the pocket such that said spring biases the rotation of the shaft.

4. The button pawl shaft of claim 3 wherein said spring is a torsion spring.

5. The button pawl shaft of claim 3 wherein said spring is precompressed in said pocket.

6. The button pawl shaft of claim 2 further comprising a lock plug arranged on said button, said lock plug having opposed protuberances on a side facing one of said first and second panels, said protuberances being positioned to deny rotation of the shaft when said lock plug is in a locked state due to contact of the protuberances with a rib on one of said first and second panels and permitting rotation of the shaft when said lock plug is in an unlocked state.

7. The button pawl shaft of claim 1 wherein said shaft is monolithic.

8. The button pawl shaft of claim 1 wherein at least a portion of each of said pawls which engages with a respective keeper is ramp-shaped.

9. A latch comprising the button pawl shaft of claim 1.

10. A button pawl shaft for releasably joining first and second panels comprising:

a center shaft piece, said center shaft piece having at least one recess at each of two opposite longitudinal ends of said center shaft piece;

a first end shaft piece and second end shaft piece, each of said first and second end shaft pieces having:

a protuberance at an end thereof, each protuberance being engaged with a respective recess of the center shaft piece, and

a pawl, each of said pawls having a portion thereof which is shaped so as to be engageable with a respective keeper on one of the first and second panels upon rotation of said button pawl shaft,

wherein said center shaft piece has a button thereon, said button actuating the rotation of the button pawl shaft when a user applies a force to said button such that each of said pawls engages the respective keeper on the other of the first and second panels.

11. The button pawl shaft of claim 10 further comprising at least one bezel along said button pawl shaft in which said button pawl shaft rotates, said bezel being fixed to one of said first and second panels wherein a portion of said button pawl shaft is snap fit into said bezel.

12. The button pawl shaft of claim 11 wherein the portion of the button pawl shaft which rotates in said bezel is an axis having a flat portion which provides a detent position during rotation of the shaft.

13. The button pawl shaft of claim 10 further comprising at least one bezel along said button pawl shaft in which said button pawl shaft rotates, wherein a first portion of said bezel is fixed to one of said first and second panels and a remaining portion of said bezel can be removably separated from the first portion of the bezel and a portion of said button pawl shaft is snap fit into said bezel.

14. The button pawl shaft of claim 11, wherein said button pawl shaft further comprises:

at least one pocket along said shaft, and

a spring located in said pocket, said spring applying a force in the rotation direction of the shaft on the bezel and on the pocket such that said spring biases the rotation of the shaft.

15. The button pawl shaft of claim 14 wherein said spring is a torsion spring.

16. The button pawl shaft of claim 14 wherein said spring is precompressed in said pocket.

17. The button pawl shaft of claim 11 further comprising a lock plug arranged on said button, said lock plug having opposed protuberances on a side facing one of said first and second panels, said protuberances being positioned to deny rotation of the shaft when said lock plug is in a locked state due to contact of the protuberances with a rib on one of said first and second panels and permitting rotation of the shaft when said lock plug is in an unlocked state.

18. The button pawl shaft of claim 10 wherein at least a portion of each of said pawls which engages with a respective keeper is ramp-shaped.

19. A latch comprising the button pawl shaft of claim 10.